

INQUIRY INTO THE PROPOSED AERIAL SHOOTING OF BRUMBIES IN KOSCIUSZKO NATIONAL PARK

DATE 24 January 2024

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: How were the vets selected for the independent observation of the trial shooting in Kosciuszko National Park, and what is their practical academic background for shooting horses?

STEVEN COLEMAN: Which independent vet—the one that national parks employed or the one we engaged?

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: The one that you engaged.

STEVEN COLEMAN: You can probably talk to that, Scott.

SCOTT MEYERS: We used a specialist equine vet who has a practice and who deals mainly in equines.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: With respect, that does not answer the question. The question is what practical and academic background does that person have in the shooting of horses?

STEVEN COLEMAN: Can we take that one on notice?

RESPONSE

The vet in question was selected based on their extensive experience and qualifications in equine care and management. Their academic background includes graduating with first-class honours from the University of Queensland with a Bachelor of Veterinary Science. Additionally, their practical experience extends to gelding stallions and treating injuries resulting from the capture and transport of wild horses. The vet is also a licensed firearm user, and uses firearms for the euthanasia of horses in circumstances where appropriate, and is a Member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Scientists by examination.

Their role in the trial shooting was to ensure that the welfare of the horses was maintained and to provide an independent assessment of the methods used. The vet's expertise in equine behaviour and health was crucial for making informed observations and assessments in this context. We recognise the importance of having an expert with theoretical and practical experience in equine matters for such a sensitive and significant task.

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Yes. What scientific evaluation of ballistics and the effects of these projectiles on these animals was applied in your evaluation and sign-off of the Government's request for advice sent to you on 30 November, which you responded to in basically a series of one-liners on 1 December? What scientific evaluation of ballistics and applied projectile science have you as an organisation sourced to give you the qualification to do that letter of advice to the Government?

STEVEN COLEMAN: Chair, is it possible to get a copy of that so I can understand? The CHAIR: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Absolutely, happy to.

The CHAIR: You can also take any of the questions on notice.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: I cannot tell who signed it, Mr Coleman, because it has all been blacked out. It has probably been signed by you.

STEVEN COLEMAN: Can we take it on notice?

The CHAIR: Yes, you can.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Did you sign that letter?

STEVEN COLEMAN: I can't recall. That's why I want to have a look.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: And the Government's letter of a request for information and confirmation—

STEVEN COLEMAN: It looks like my letter.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: It took 24 hours to respond with a series of one-liners. That is very

professional!

STEVEN COLEMAN: I am happy to take that on notice.

RESPONSE

RSPCA NSW's advice has been sought based on our expertise in animal welfare, which is the core focus of our organisation. We understand that assessing ballistics and their impact on animals is a highly specialised field. While our organisation possesses extensive knowledge and experience in animal welfare matters, we recognise that the specific evaluation of ballistics is outside our expertise. For this reason, we understand that the NSW Government has sought ballistics advice from other parties.

In preparing our response to the government's request for advice, we relied on existing research and standards related to humane methods of animal control and culling. This includes guidelines and best practices established by animal welfare and wildlife management authorities, both nationally and internationally. Our advice aimed to ensure that any actions taken would minimise suffering and adhere to the highest standards of animal welfare.

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE: I might just ask a question of Mr Coleman as well, because I have got a minute. Mr Coleman, you say in the RSPCA submission that the program will or should, over time, lead to 8,000 fewer horses being killed, and I think that is as a consequence of population growth not being the same. Could you explain exactly what that calculation is?

STEVEN COLEMAN: Can I take that one notice?

The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE: Certainly. Thank you.

RESPONSE

The calculation is based on the projected population growth of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park and the impact of the proposed management program on this growth. The figure of 8,000 fewer horses being killed is derived from an analysis of the expected population trends without intervention compared to those anticipated under the proposed management program.

The calculation is based on:

1. *Baseline Population Growth: We initially assess the current population of wild horses in the park and their natural growth rate based on the officially published numbers of wild horses. Reproductive rates, mortality rates, and environmental conditions influence this rate.*
2. *Projected Growth Without Intervention: Based on the natural growth rate, we project the potential increase in the horse population over a specified period if no management interventions are implemented. This projection estimates the population size that could be reached if the horses are left to breed and grow naturally.*
3. *Impact of the Management Program: The proposed management program aims to reduce the growth rate of the horse population. By implementing these measures, the program seeks to stabilise and gradually reduce the population to a sustainable level.*
4. *Comparison and Calculation: We compare the projected population size without intervention to the anticipated population size with the implementation of the management program. The difference in these figures over the same period represents the number of horses that would not need to be culled due to the reduced growth rate achieved through the program. This is where the figure of 8,000 fewer horses being killed originates.*

This calculation aims to demonstrate the potential effectiveness of the management program in controlling the population growth of wild horses humanely and sustainably, thereby reducing the need for more drastic measures like culling.

It is important to note that these calculations involve a degree of estimation and are based on available data and projections. We are committed to continuously monitoring and adjusting our advice based on actual population dynamics and the effectiveness of the management measures.

EXCERPT FROM TRANSCRIPT

SCOTT MEYERS: Can I also just caution that the photos I am giving you are very graphic.

The CHAIR: Thank you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Meyers, did you say there was video as well?

SCOTT MEYERS: I do have a video file, yes, but it's obviously not included here. I don't have it on a thumb drive, but I can provide it.

The CHAIR: Thank you, that would be appreciated.

RESPONSE

The video file can be accessed [here](#).